Home Reading.

THE "SIMPLE" MAN.

It used to seem so sad to see the children gather round
With him a-playing marbles—kneeling with them on the ground;
But when their tops were spinning and you heard their arrows whiz,
No voice among the youngsters' was as happylike as his—
Not one of all the boys there could a better whistle make
Than those so deftly fashioned by Old Jud Drake.

Barefooted, gray and wrinkled, lolling through the summer day,
He used to seem so jolly when he joined a them in their play;
He won Tom Culver's "chineys"—which he lost to Charlie Stone;
He fought with Charlie Parker for a ball he thought his own;
A man in years and stature, but a boy still, in spirit, could shake
The honesty and justice of Old Jud Drake.

Ah, me; sometimes I wonder if it wasn't just as well:
He was concerned so little in the matters that befell:
His life was smooth and placid, freighted with the childish joys
That come from the championship of village girls and boys;
And I, who won his marbles—even now I sometimes take
A stealthy, wistful glance back to Old Jud Drake.

His grave is in the churchyard, where the sun in summer smiled,
And now I deem he wanders hand in hand with some sweet child,
And that the younger angels gather with him through the day,
And—as we used to yonder—join him gayly in his play.
For well he loved the children, and I know his heart would break
If no child in Heaven came to play with Old Jud Drake.

—Chicago Record.

MR. WILLIAMS' ECONOMY.

"Did it ever occur to you that little Victor is getting to be nearly three years old?" inquired Mr. Williams, looking up from the newspaper which he had not been reading for five minutes.

"Well," said Mrs. Williams, "as we have been celebrating his birthday every month since he was six months old, and as we observed it weekly up to that time, I suppose it would be rather difficult for me not to remember the boy's age. Why?" with some concern. She had half an idea that he was thinking of some wonderfully advantageous scheme for the little one's benefit.

"Well," said Mr. Williams, "it seems to me that we ought to be calculating upon his education."

"Oh, my," his wife cried, laughing. "Why, he isn't old enough by three years even to go to the kindergarten."

"I didn't mean to send him at once," said Mr. Williams, looking proudly at his offspring, now engaged in the highly educational pursuit of building a miraculous sort of tower out of his blocks, and knocking the edifice down and then laughing gleefully. "Of course he's too young for that, but it seems to me that we ought to begin providing for the future. We ought to start in to lay by a fund for his education. I want him to attend college and all that, and of course that costs money, and possibly misfortune might come just at the time when we wanted to give him educational advantages, and if we didn't have a special fund to draw upon the child would have to go through life illiterate."

"I don't think there is any danger," Mrs. Williams started to say, but Williams interrupted her.

"Sometimes," he declared, "I am ashamed of myself for my spendthrift habits. Every little once in awhile I am confronted by the idea that I am paving the way for starvation for my family by pandering to the needless little vices which have grown up around me. I never deny myself anything, and some time—"

"Oh, you're a dear old goose, and you haven't any vices at all, and we shall get along nicely. Don't get blue about nothing."

"I'm not blue; but look here." He threw a paper from his pocketbook—a paper covered with figures. Presenting it to his wife, who was always appalled at the sight of mathematical displays, and never could get at the bottom of them, he said: "Look at that."

"What is it?" she queried, helplessly. "The compound interest on the abstract to the trust deed of our house?"

"It is shaving," gloomily. "I would not have believed it myself. But I figured it up on the train to-day, and is shows an appalling condition. I have squandered in the last 15 years $766.50 in shaving—just plain shaving, common-or-garden shaving. No frills to it. No mustache curling or anything of that sort. Isn't that scandalous, and all the time that boy not knowing where the money was going to come from for his education."

"Why," said Mrs. Williams, "he wasn't born until three years ago."

"The theory is just the same," her husband insisted. "It is a vicious waste of money and I am going to correct it as far as I can."

"What are you going to do?"

"I am going to shave myself and apply the money to a fund for little Victor's forthcoming education. I can do it."

The next day Mr. Williams came home in high elation. He had several rancy-looking little bundles in his overcoat pocket, and, unloading them on the dining-room table, little Victor, as is the custom of speculative children of his age, gladly seized upon them, crying:

"Papa bring me this!"

Mr. Williams, who had been hanging up his overcoat at the moment of the seizure, came rushing in from the hall like a full back rushing to get a punted ball.

"Heavens and earth! He'll cut his hand off with that razor. Grab him!" he called. The baby had been howlingly rescued from impending calamity, Mr. Williams then explained the nature of his purchases.

"This," he said "is a mug. It cost a dollar, but seven shaves will save it back to me. This brush cost another dollar—same reckoning. The strop cost me $2.50 and the sponge 75 cents. The shaving soap—"

"Oh, now, Harry!" Mrs. Williams interrupted in triumph. "Now I can tell you where you wasted money for all your good intentions. I bought a whole case of soap at the department store the other day, and Ida says it's just magnificent. You can scour with it, too."

Mr. Williams tried to explain that there was some difference between soaps, but she declared that hers made just as nice lather as one could wish, and the only difference, she said, was that he had paid about 50 times as much, proportionate to quantity, as she had.

"I had to get the best of the permanent and unchangeable things," Mr. Williams said, evading the soap question, though he knew he was right.

"The strop, sponge and mug, you see, cannot suffer much change by time. But I saved considerably on the razor, for I reasoned that you can sharpen a razor every time you shave, and so it is useless to buy a costly one. I paid 43 cents for this one, and I am sure it will answer every purpose. The bay rum and other things—"

"Oh, are there still more things to use? I didn't know the process of shaving was such a complex one. I thought all that was needed was something sharp enough to get the beard off."

"Well," said Mr. Williams, dubiously, "I will confess that I thought so, too, but the fellow reminded me of all these things, and, sure enough, I remembered that they were necessary. But just a few weeks and they will all be paid for, and then every time I shave after that it will be clear profit. Think of saving that much money for the benefit of the baby," and Mr. Williams gathered his offspring up and rapturously kissed him.

The next morning Mr. Williams started in on the work of economy. He procured a handglass and hung it to the wall, only to find when he began operations that the glass was invariably on the wrong side of the light and his hand always shaded his face. His lather seemed to be reluctant and watery also, but those were minor evils which could be remedied if he only had time, which he didn't, for his train was due to leave in half an hour. He lathered on in a liquid way for several minutes, and then opened hostilities with his beard.

There is no cause for description of the horrible half-hour which followed. Men who have never learned to shave and who try it know how the thing works, and nobody else would credit a fraction of the true story. Mr. Williams discovered new angles in his countenance—angles never before revealed to human eye. He found that his razor, although sharp enough to perform almost any miracle in mowing, positively balked at his two-days-old stubble, and when he did succeed in chopping off a dozen spikes at a sawing sweep it was a victory achieved through floods of blood. He pulled the razor and pushed and worked it crosswise and gave it every motion to which the arm is a possible contributor, and every moment a new smarting sensation was the register of a new "pinking." But it was not until he had worked his way down from the cheek to the chin that the full measure of his contract occurred to him. There the blade, defied by the stumpy beard, lunged and plunged and the uprooting sensation was continuous and fearful.

But he was game, and ten minutes after his train had left he rushed from the house, pretending to be in too big a hurry to catch the next train to stop to kiss his wife.

The next day Mr. Williams tried it again.

He made another effort the following day.

On the fourth day Mr. Williams sneaked into his former shop in Chicago, and, approaching his favorite barber, said: "Ed, I have been shaving here so long I thought I'd bring my mug in. And while I was at it I concluded to buy an entire outfit for you to use on me. Here's the razor and the strop."

He hoped that Ed would not know the truth, but the barber, looking at his harrowed face, understood. When Mr. Williams had gone the other barbers gathered around in an awed fashion to look at the razor.

Mrs. Williams is a wise woman. So wise that she has never mentioned the Little Victor Educational Fund since the day of its incipiency. — Chicago Record.

Roast Turkey with Giblet Sauce.

Select a fat young hen turkey. Singe and wash. Fill with rich bread or cracker dressing, well seasoned, and if liked, two onions may be finely minced and added to the dressing. Stuff both body and breast with this. Lay the turkey in the basting pan and pour two cupfuls of hot water around it. Bake slowly but steadily, basting frequently. Allow from 10 to 12 minutes a pound, if the fowl is a young one, but 15 or more if it is an old, tough one. To make the giblet sauce, boil the heart, liver and gizzard in two quarts of water for two hours. Take up, chop fine and return to the gravy with a spoonful of flour. Season with salt and pepper, and pour in the pan in which the turkey was cooked, and stir, and serve. Serve this sauce in gravy boat. — Ladies' World.

A Matter of Business.

Servant (from next door)—Please, mum, missus sends her compliments, and will ye be so kind as to sing and play the piano this afternoon?

Lady—Why, certainly. Tell your mistress I'm glad she likes it.

"O, it isn't that, mum; she's expecting the landlord, and she wants some excuse for asking for a reduction of the rent."—Boston Globe.

—Gold in large quantities has been discovered in the interior of New Guinea by Sir William McGregor, the governor, who recently traveled across the island.

IN IGNORANT CIRCLES.

Education Does Not Always Make One Safe in an Egg Trade.

I was sitting on a keg of nails in a West Virginia mountain store, watching a native dickering with the merchant over a trade of a bucket of eggs for a calico dress. After some time a bargain was closed, the native walked out with the dress in a bundle under his arms and I followed him.

"It isn't any business of mine," I said, "but I was watching the trade and I was surprised to see you let the eggs go for the dress."

"What for?" he asked, in astonishment, as he mounted his horse.

"How many eggs did you have?"

"Basket full."

"How many dozen?"

"Dunno. Can't count."

"That's where you miss the advantage of education. With knowledge you might have got two dress for those eggs."

"But I didn't want two dresses, mister," he argued.

"Perhaps not, but that was no reason why you should have paid two prices for one. The merchant got the advantage of you because of his education. He knew what he was about."

He looked at me for a minute, as if he felt real sorry for me. Then he grinned and pulled his horse over close to me.

"I reckon," he half whispered, casting furtive glances toward the store, "his eddication ain't so much mor'n mine ez you think it is. He don't know how many uv them aigs is spiled an' I do," and he rode away before I could argue further.—Albany Argus.

HATS AND HEADACHE.

Average Weight of Woman's Head Covering and Its Effect on the Brain.

With all its other sins the fashionable big hat is charged with being the cause of an endless number of headaches.

"It is owing to its weight," exclaimed a doctor. "Hats that press down on the forehead with a mass of weight in front are particularly to blame. It's hard to get a woman to admit that her hat is too heavy, but it is so. When you consider that a woman's brain, on the average, weighs about 44 ounces, or four ounces less than a man's, and that she puts on a hat weighing half as much as the brain, while the man's hat weighs hardly one-quarter what his wife's hat does, it's interesting. I think sometimes that probably the less a woman's brain weighs the more does the hat she puts on it."

With a pair of scales a number of millinery establishments were inspected. In a big Sixth avenue millinery department, where imported hats are the rule and few head coverings under ten dollars are to be found, the heaviest hats that could be found were brought out. The heaviest was a white felt braid, sailor shape, with a pyramid-shaped mass of flowers made to rest on the corner of the brow and a cushion of violets under the brim. It weighed 12 ounces easily. A big hat that had an eight-inch brim and was heavily loaded apparently with a jet rope edge and jet around the crown only tipped eight ounces. The department manager smiled as he said:

"All is not jet that shines this year. It is a substitute to reduce the weight of the hats."

A hat, all of chinchilla fur, that looked heavy enough to prove a load weighed only eight ounces. A little steel bonnet, the size of a hand, weighed nine ounces. The average weight of half a dozen big hats of the worst theater class was only eight ounces. Over on Fifth avenue, in a shop from which the best-dressed women get the most exclusive fashions, the manager smiled.

"It's nonsense, I am sure, about headaches and big hats," she said. "Why, we use every art to decrease the weight of these big hats. We even use willow for foundations. We often change and alter hats with just that in view until the largest hats will be lighter than the smaller ones. Here is one, for instance."

And she selected an immense black hat in one of the new French shapes. It towered a foot in the air, with a mass of white plumes. About the crown was a twist of white tulle and some velvet. The hat measured at least a foot one way and considerably more from back to front. On any but a large head it would have looked top-heavy. On the scales it weighed only a scant four ounces and the manager of the place smiled triumphantly. Only one hat in the entire shop weighed 14 ounces. One weighed 12, but apparently the bigger the hat and price the less it weighed. Prices of such creations never drop. They rise.

Down in Grand street everything ran the other way. A real Grand street hat, properly trimmed, with the requisite stylish number of wings and ornaments of various kinds—a hat as big as the four-ounce Fifth avenue hat—hardly weighed less than 14 ounces. It was easy to find them weighing 19 and 20 ounces. Something "most magnificent," which cost $19, was the champion heavyweight at 24 ounces, and was warranted to give any but a giantess or a woman with a constitution of iron a chronic headache.—N. Y. World.

Ferns In the House.

A bit of living green in a room from which none can be seen through the window often proves a positive joy. A fernery is the easiest thing in the world to manage. It does not require either sunshine or constant attention but with a little care now and then gets on beautifully almost by itself. The fern case must be long and deep enough not to crowd the plants, and built of sufficiently heavy glass to keep the heat of the room from penetrating it. The oblong style has been found to be the most convenient shape, as it will stand solidly upon a table in any out-of-the-way corner, and not topple over at every jar. The framework may be of wood or iron, iron preferably, as the wood absorbs considerable of the moisture that should go to the plants. A good depth of rich soil should be put in and the ferns set as thickly as one wishes. Of course the earth must be kept moist always, but there need be little or no sunshine.—St. Louis Republic.

Fig Slump.

Wash and soak over night half a pound of figs. In the morning put over the fire and cook slowly for half an hour. When the figs are cold split them into halves, put them into a saucepan, cover over with sirup and the juice of half a lemon. Make a batter, cover over the top, cook ten minutes and serve hot with whipped cream.—N. Y. Ledger.

Lining for Sleeves.

Tarletan is the accepted lining for sleeves this winter. This is thin and not bulky and holds the puff out just enough. Altogether it will be found just the thing to improve the appearance of the new sleeve if used.—Chicago Tribune.

THE GIRL IN GRAY.

Irresistible Impulses Which Called Her to a Life of Renunciation.

Susan earned her daily bread by trying on hats in one of the majestic dry goods palaces of the metropolis. Her beautiful head, fine eyes, exquisitely refined expression and beautiful figure had been the source of a splendid income to her. She did not know it, but nature had been most kind in making her an ideal model for the millinery business.

Susan was a gray girl. She was a perfect poem in gray. Her eyes were deep, twilight gray; her skin the cream gray of the white flesh about a bluebird's beak; her eye that drab gray-brown which is noticeable in the eyes of Welsh girls, and her eyelashes such a tint of chestnut gray as ornamented the mane of the famous race horse Sir William.

Susan was full of gray moods, and her favorite position was to sit half bent over in one of the guest's chairs in the aforesaid emporium, with a Paris creation upon her fair head, and to gaze out of the window.

People came and people went, and they wondered that such a beautiful girl was not fairly carried away by some rich and appreciative wife-hunter, who had a taste for the fine arts. An artist who went to the shop to sketch hats and bonnets raved over Susan, but Susan didn't mind. To all his compliments she only smiled a cold, gray, far-away smile that could be easily interpreted. Susan interested an author one time enough to have her question the girl and find out why she always wore such a pensive look and seemed altogether removed from her environment.

She found that Susan was all alone in the world; that she came from a good English family; that she was obliged to cross the ocean to earn her living; that she cared little for dress and worldly things.

After becoming better acquainted with Susan she learned that most of the girl's female relatives had been nuns.

Susan said to her one afternoon, when they were friends: "I have a perfect horror of ever becoming a nun myself, but day after day the idea grows upon me, and I am sure that some fine morning I shall go to the sisters and ask them to take me in. I truly believe that heredity has called me to that mission. I think so much about not becoming a nun that my mind is drawn to them, and their lives own me.

"I unconsciously read all about them in publications. I follow them about in the streets; I cast my eyes down when I meet them, and always speak to them if I have a chance. I cannot keep away from the nun costume, and every dress I have is made as near like theirs as it can possibly be. I wonder if it is hypnotism or thought transference, or the effect of training, or what?

"Do you know much about mysticism and mental science? If you do, tell me. Do people always feel drawn to do what their hearts tell them not to do?"

The author could not answer, but was left guessing, as the girl had been.

One day the author went to the shop to get a new hat for a swell matinee, and of course asked for Susan and she was told that Susan had suddenly become very pious and had given up her position to do religious embroidery in one of the technical shops connected with the church.

The author heard nothing more from the girl until one day, while investigating a charity on the east side, she saw a familiar figure flit past. Upon looking intensely at it, it proved to be Susan.

She smiled, and recognized the author, and said: "And how is it with you? I have answered my own question. I have proven to myself that each individual is given the mental life to perceive and enjoy those things which bring pleasure and to be able to sacrifice and give happiness to others, and the spiritual life as an inspiration pointing the way to a better life, where the only pleasure is in giving up pleasure and the only happiness in bestowing your own inheritance of it upon those who have neither mental perception nor spiritual inspiration.

"When I fought my own soul I was nearing a point where my mind would have become shattered because my mind had not solved the wants of my spirit. Now I love that which I hated, and hate nothing, and I feel that this is the highest state a human being can reach."

And artists and society women look in vain for an ideal model in the famous dry goods shop to anticipate their artistic wants.—N. Y. Mail and Express.

HER EFFECTIVE METHOD.

Fair Passenger Makes a Request for More Room in the Street Car and Gets It.

She was little and meek looking; he was big and a bully. This was apparent the moment they entered the car, says the Chicago Tribune. The impression was intensified by the timid way in which she crowded herself into the least possible space, while he spread himself all over. His coat sleeve was interposed between her face and the rest of the car, and the skirts of his long ulster almost covered her lap. The other passengers supposed them married as a matter of course, and when the little woman spoke, she might almost as well have fired a bombshell.

Slowly and carefully extricating herself from the folds of his garments, she gently but decidedly seized his arm, and lowered it into a position which permitted her to see the conductor as he demanded his fare. Then she addressed him quietly, but in a clear voice, which was audible all through the car.

"I am afraid I must trouble you a moment," she said gently. "Will you kindly ask this gentleman next me to remove his elbow from my mouth?"

The conductor stared, the other passengers laughed, but the little woman never moved a muscle or an eyelash, and the elbow came down to normal attitude suddenly.

Articles of Lingerie.

There is something very attractive about dainty underwear, and many articles of the kind are suitable for gifts that should be tied up in dainty packages with the narrow satin baby-ribbon, ten yards of which usually cost 18 cents. To a servant two neat muslin nightgowns at a dollar will save her this outlay and probably fill a decided want. The young girl going on a visit will appreciate a couple of batiste or cambric nightgowns trimmed in lace or embroidery and costing from two to five dollars each. Another present is a set of nightgown, chemise and drawers folded neatly in a box for seven dollars; or an umbrella skirt, a lawn skirt having a full ruffle, put on with a heading or beading and edged with insertion for about two dollars. A couple of pretty corset-covers at a dollar, a lace-trimmed lawn dressing-sack at three dollars, or enough pink or blue surah silk for a similar sack, with ribbons and lace for trimming, will delight any girl loving nice lingerie.—Ladies' Home Journal.

PONY FOR FORTY CENTS.

New Swindle Practiced Upon the Gullible New Yorker.

Here is a brand-new swindle. The man who invented it or heard of it in some out-of-the-way part of the world had some money, says the New York Recorder. He rented a house in one of the oldest parts of New York. It is a quarter in which swell Knickerbockers lived, and some of their descendants live there to this day. He made himself a familiar figure in a liquor store in the neighborhood, where he sampled various brands and vintages and proved himself a connoisseur.

One day he told the proprietor that he had taken down a brick wall in the rear of the cellar of his house, intending to replace it with stone, as it had grown moldy. Behind it he found three casks of remarkable brandy that had been lying recondite for many years, undoubtedly the property of some long dead and forgotten householder, who knew a good thing when he saw it, and was saving it.

The saloon man bought it at $16 a gallon, having previously tasted an alleged sample that for bouquet has never been surpassed upon this continent or any other. The goods were delivered and the tenant disappeared with two months' rent in arrears. It was really good brandy worth about six dollars a gallon, at which price it had been bought from a Broadway street wine merchant.

However, the wineroom man did not lose anything. His customers are drinking brandy (at 40 cents a "pony") which they are assured has lain in a New York cellar for 100 years.

THE ARK-BORN MAN.

Which of Noah's Descendants First Saw the Light in the Ark?

Hundreds of ancient gleaners of miscellaneous curios, legends, myths and traditions give us to understand that Cush was born on the ark, says the St. Louis Republic. Others claim that there was a child born on the sacred vessel, but that it was sacrificed to one of the wild beasts, Noah declaring that no person should leave the ark who had not gone on board in the regulation manner. The weight of the evidence as it is given by the Talmudic writers is to the effect that Cush is the person referred to by the old-time mystery gleaners when they speak of the "ark-born" man. The sacred books, as well as the scores of Biblical encyclopedias, hand books of ancient history, etc., are silent on the subject. In a reprint of one of the rare old "Saxon Chronicles" is found a clew to the mystery, and another slight hint in an explanatory note in Herbert's "Nimrod." In the "Saxon Chronicles" the following occurs: "Bedwig was the son or Shem, who was the son of Noah, and he, Bedwig, was born on the ark." Herbert's note in "Nimrod," column ii, page 37, says "Kybele is the ark, and, as Cush was begotten in the ark, his posterity were, in a peculiar sense, descended from that ship." Although Herbert made no direct references to the fact of Cush being actually born in the ark, he speaks of him in several places as "Cush, the ark-born." The Talmudic writers discredit the Bedwig story, but declare that Cush was born on the day that "God's covenant" (the rainbow) first appeared.

Bingo—"How is the new cook doing?" Mrs. Bingo—"Splendidly. Why, she has only been here three days, and she can already ride my wheel quite nicely."—N. Y. Herald.

Smith—"I wish I had studied boxing when I was a boy. You see, I need it so much in my profession." Jones (surprised)—"What! as a lawyer?" Smith—"No. As a father."—Harper's Bazar.

"So you feel ill, my little lad?" asked the kind minister. "You should go and tell your mother. She will give you sage advice." "That's jest it," said the boy. "I'm doggone sick o' sage."—N. Y. Press.

"The age of chivalry is entirely past," she said. "I don't know about that," the young man answered. "Men can't engage in duels to settle affairs of the heart." "No. But they can join rival football teams."—Washington Star.

VOICES TO SUIT.

A French Scientist Claims They May Be Easily Acquired.

Are you a soprano, and have you a difficulty in reaching and emitting the high "c?" Are you a tenor, and, if not, do you want to be? Are you a dissatisfied barrytone, and wish to become a basso profundo?

If so there is no reason why you should not. These questions and the answer one Dr. Sandras, a medical luminary of Paris, makes the burden of a song that is just now interesting Parisians, and especially embryo Pattis, De Reszkes and Plancons.

These latter naturally reply that they do, and the disciple of Esculapius forthwith buttonholes them and proceeds to explain the means by which they are to accomplish the feat. He is quite sure about his discovery being one of the wonders of the age. He claims that in order to modify the sounds of the human voice one has only to inhale the vapors of certain liquids and essences. Thus, inhalations of curacoa, according to Dr. Sandras, will raise the voice two notes, the aspiration of absinthe will add one high and two low notes, and essence extracted from pines will give two low notes. A dissolution of coffee beans in rum, he claims, will strengthen the medium notes.

There are other odors that are said to be even more efficacious, though they have the disadvantage of not tickling the olfactory nerves so agreeably. But no singer would stick at such a trifle as this, if he or she desired to reach a much coveted and hitherto unattainable note.

For instance, there are kerosene and turpentine, and—yes—even strychnine. The effect of the latter, according to the doctor, is positively marvelous. He claims that it raises the voice no fewer than five notes, and will enable almost anybody to deliver with ease Tamberlick's famous chest C, that never failed to bring down the house.

But, declare jealous rivals of Dr. Sandras, there are other vapors that have a contrary effect—that of aniseed, for instance, which occasions hoarseness, and herein lies a danger to singers. Imagine the consequences to the great Signora Uppersee if, when about to "go on" for the mad scene in "Lucia di Lammermoor," she inhaled aniseed, surreptitiously substituted for strychnine by her jealous rival, Mme. Semibreve di Minim.

But just as there is no rose without a thorn, so there is no great discovery that has not its drawbacks, and as the contretemps referred to can be generally guarded against, Dr. Sandras' theory may soon be put into widespread practice. Then, when the lovesick Juliette is seen ecstatically burying her nose in a bouquet thoughtfully flung to her balcony by Romeo, the unpoetical Philistine in the audience will surmise that she is only inhaling kerosene fumes from a bottle artfully concealed among the flowers.—Chicago Tribune.

CONCERNING SKIRTS.

The Wide Flare Is No Longer the Leading Style.

A word about skirts, which seem to be more in a transition state than any other article of feminine wearing apparel. There is a close, habit-like skirt, which is the extreme mode of the hour. It is so close and fits so snugly over the hips that it fastens by an invisible row of buttons in the back seam. The average fashionable skirt has the front plain and close fitting on the hips, with the fullness thrown to the back, but with no stiffened outspreading godets. These skirts clear the ground and are trim-looking. Some of the newest tailor-made skirts show lengthwise trimmings. The side seams, for instance, are ornamented by two rows of inch-wide braid uniting in a cloverleaf border along the hem. One modiste describes the new skirt by saying that skirts standing out in points about the feet are things of the past, and that the present shape is gracefully eased about the hips and full at the back. Many women welcome the return of the trained evening skirt, which was rendered impossible by the large circular skirts that have been so long in vogue. Trimmings, drapery and trains are all new features for evening dress skirts. The youthful dancing frock skirt is a succession of flounces over a silk foundation. A pretty model has a blue silk foundation with three overskirts of pale blue tulle falling over it.

Petticoats that come next the dress can never be too elegant for the dressy woman. As much distinction is made concerning different petticoats as concerning different gowns. Those for morning wear under woolen dresses are of mohair or alpaca, embellished with several small flounces of the same, bound with velvet. For afternoon wear petticoats are of taffeta or broche satin with flounces of silk and lace, full and fussy. For evening wear the height of elegance is to have the outside petticoat match the silk of dress. This is trimmed with deep flounces edged with lace. For a grand ball or for a bride the correct petticoat is of white silk or satin, profusely trimmed with lace and bows of white ribbon. A novelty was noted the other day in a silk petticoat, the wide bottom flounce being trimmed with five or six tiny ruffles, giving, of course, a very wide and full effect about the bottom.—St. Louis Republic.

OBSERVING THE PROPRIETIES.

A Long But Successful Search for a Suitable Name.

The colored man had tied his mule to a telegraph pole while he went into the feed store. When he came out he found the animal industriously gnawing a hole into the wood.

"Why don't you feed you mule?" a bystander inquired.

"Feed 'um! Mistuh, I gibs dat mule five meals er day, an' dat's three mo'n what I gits. He's wuss'n er goat. Scrap iron doan stop 'im no mo'n ez if 'twas short'nin' bread."

"He must have a remarkable digestion."

"De only t'ing dat makes dat anamile er mule is an accident of birth. Ef he'd happened ter hab two laigs 'stid o' fou' he'd of been er orstrich."

While the hitching strap was being untied the mule became restless and his owner cried:

"Whoa, dar, Sulphuric Acid!"

"What's that you call him?"

"Sulphuric Acid. His name useter be Julius Caesar."

"How did you happen to change it?"

"Wal, suh, I didn't name 'im Julius Caesar in de fus' place, an' I nebber did t'ink dat wif er lop-eared, no-'count mule dat name made sense. So I kep' mer ears open foh sumpin' mo' 'propriate. I wuz wuk'in' foh er drug stoh man an' one day when I done broke er big demijohn I byuhd 'im say dat sulphuric acid am de catin'est t'ing dat is. I didn' look no furder, but I went home an' hel' er christenin' den an' dar."—Washington Star.

MATCH MAKING.

The Dangers of Bringing About Matrimonial Alliances.

"Of all inflictions," said a young professional man who has just had an experience, "deliver me from the match-maker. I feel myself competent to struggle with most of the ills of life; I have built up a good business in the face of what seemed impossible obstacles, and have maintained my standing and position, mentally, morally, physically, socially and financially, and have looked after members of my family who were unable to look after themselves. And all of this undertaking hasn't been half so trying and perplexing as the efforts of my friends to find me a wife, and the irritation incident to my refusal to accept the young woman when she was found and placed as a tempting bait before my eyes. I have quarreled with some of my boon companions, had unpleasantnesses with a number of my closest friends, and have indulged in infelicities, domestic and otherwise, when exasperated and hurried past further endurance. I have gently indicated to the members of my family and others that a little light mental gymnastics in the way of minding their own business would be of untold benefit to their intellects and a blessing unspeakable to me. And then there have been sharp words and tears and reproaches, and I have been made to appear ungrateful and unappreciative because I really wouldn't see what was best for me! As if a man who has reached the age of 40 years and has taken care of himself at least half of that time, isn't capable of judging even the least little bit of what is good for him. In the first place, I am not specially anxious to marry, and, in the second, I want to make my own selection, unhampered and unbiased by the views of anybody else. Haven't I got to live with her? And isn't my interest in the matter altogether ahead of that of anyone else? It seems so to me, and yet people will persist in forcing upon my attention ladies whom I would, under no circumstances, think of for a moment in such a relation.

"One of my best friends, a lady in whose family I have for years been almost as much at home as in my own dwelling, made up a little party, a few months ago, for a week's trip through the Adirondacks. When everything was settled, indeed just as we were about to start, I learned, for the first time, that my special comrade was a young woman to whom I had shown some attention the season before, but whose intimate acquaintance I had dropped for reasons not at all reflecting upon her, but simply because I was just a little weary of some of her peculiarities. For a moment I was inclined to give up the outing, the more so as my friend was fully aware of my feelings toward the young woman, but did not in the least sympathize with them. She liked her and determined to throw us together and literally force a proposal. Indeed, I afterward learned that she had said she would have us engaged before we were back again.

"Well, the long and short of it was we were not only engaged, but such desperate efforts were made to put me in a position where I could not in common reason refuse to propose to the girl that I was thoroughly disgusted, and haven't seen my friends since our little journey ended. And I care very little if we never meet again. Matchmakers have need of the greatest skill and adroitness in order to avoid bungling. And such skill is possessed by very few persons in this meddlesome world. It therefore behooves the average individual to be very wary of trying to force the inclinations of those between whom they desire to establish matrimonial alliances. Love is easily led, but never driven, a fact that a great many would-be match-makers never seem to realize."—N. Y. Ledger.

WORLD'S BOOK PRODUCTION.

Interesting But Faulty Figures Secured from a French Source.

A French authority gives some interesting figures as to the annual production of books. In 1895, according to this statement, 6,516 new books and new editions were issued in Great Britain, 5,469 in the United States, 23,007 in Germany, 12,495 in France and 9,437 in Italy. These are remarkable figures, but before any deductions are made from them it would be desirable to have some further information as to the manner in which the books have been compiled. Does anyone seriously suppose that more books are printed and published in Italy than in the United States? The fact is that the bibliographical methods of the countries named are so dissimilar that accurate comparison is impossible. The lists of publications given in the British trade journals are notoriously incomplete. Probably they include all that is important from the bookseller's point of view, but they take little or no account of the analogues of academical dissertations, reprints of magazine articles, trifles printed per nozze, and a variety of other pamphlets and small books that go to swell the figures of the "book production" of continental countries. Thus every person who takes a degree at one of the many universities in Germany must print a dissertation, and this, if it be only a compilation of a few pages, counts as a "book" when the figures come to be tabulated, and deepens the impression that every man in the fatherland of Goethe is engaged, more or less, in adding to the literature of the world. The Author.

BAD SPELLING.

An Instance in What Lady Montrose Wrote to Lady Annandale.

There is bad spelling and there is bad spelling. Artemus Ward and Josh Billings did some of it professionally, and many school children and some grown men and women do some of it even unto this day. But neither of these distinguished persons and no school child or grown-up man or woman, even in his or her wildest dream of revenge against Webster et al., ever came within a mile of the spelling of a noble Scottish lady of 200 years ago. This lady could give spades, diamonds, and trumps to any dictionary maker or compiler of spelling books and then could beat him out without looking at the cards.

She was, personally, Christian Leslie, daughter of the Duke of Rothes, and wife of the third Marquis of Montrose, and later of Sir John Bruce of Kinross. According to custom, having been a peeress, she retained her peerage title; thus it came about that Sir John Bruce lived with the Countess of Montrose with all propriety. But this was what she wrote:

"Kingrose, July 4, 1693.

"Madam: I render yow a thowsant thankes for your play, which is vere good, and I heve rettornaed itt with the bearear, and if your ladyshipe heve cather enay mor good playes or novells which yow heve read, and will be plesead to lean them to me, I shall be vere fathefouell in restorenge, and teke it a great favor, for they ar vere devertting in the countery. Your lord did me the honouer to dayn hear yesterday, and was vere well. I hertely wished your ladyshipe had come alonge, for itt wold heve bin bott a devertisement in this good wather, and yow wold heve bin vere wellcome to, dear madam, your ladyshipes most humble servantt.

"C. Montrose."

"For the right honorable the Countes of Anandeall, att hir logeng in Netherayes Waynd, Edinburgh."

If the readers who can't translate this will try temporarily to forget all they ever knew of spelling, and then will practice Lady Montrose's letter again, it is possible that they may learn what her ladyship wanted to say to Lady Annandale. What the latter said and wrote it is perhaps as well we do not know.—N. Y. Sun.

Rock Cakes.

One pound of flour, half a pound of butter, half a pound of sugar, and a few currants. Mix these ingredients with three well beaten eggs, and make into small cakes, which should be dropped with roughened tops in the cake tin for baking.—Boston Herald.